

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 02309 101850Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /082 W
-----110434Z 110364 /14

R 101628Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9272
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
OECD PARIS

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 02309

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: ELAB,PINT,BE
SUBJECT: COMMON LABOR FRONT SUSPENDS ROLLING STRIKES

REF: A.BRUSSELS 1848 B.BRUSSELS 2280

1. BELGIUM'S TWO BIG LABOR FEDERATIONS ANNOUNCED TODAY
SUSPENSION OF A MONTH-LONG SERIES OF ROLLING STRIKES CALLED
TO PROTEST THE BELT-TIGHTENING MEASURES OF EGMONT PLAN
(REFA).STRIKES WERE AIMED PRIMARILY AT FORCING THE
GOVERNMENT TO MODIFY ASPECTS OF THE PLAN UNACCEPTABLE TO LABOR.
BUT,PARLIAMENT HAVING BEEN DISSOLVED AND THE GOVERNMENT
REDUCED TO MINORITY STATUS,THE UNIONS CONCLUDED THAT
MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS WERE BLOCKED AND CONTINUATION OF
THE STRIKES POINTLESS.MOREOVER,A NUMBER OF EGMONT PLAN
MEASURES CONSIDERED OBJECTONABLE BY LABOR WHICH REQUIRE
LEGISLATIVE ACTION CANNOT NOW BE IMPLEMENTED.(PARLIAMENTARY
ACTION IS NOT RPT NOT NECESSARY,HOWEVER,TO IMPLEMENT
EGMONT'S SEVERAL TAX INCREASES.)

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2.FOR SOME DAYS PRIOR TO DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT
MARCH 9, THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN TRYING - THROUGH THE
INTERCESSION OF FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE CRISTIAN
TRADE UNION FEDERATION (CSC)(NOW MINISTER OF STATE)
AUGUST COLL TO BRING AN END TO THE STRIKES. NOT
SURPRISINGLY,CSC TOOK THE LEAD IN SUSPENDING THE STRIKE
ACTION,THE SOCIALIST FGTB FOLLOWING IN ORDER TO PRESERVE

LABOR'S COMMON FRONT.GOVERNMENT CONCERN AT THE ECONOMIC
EFFECT OF THE STRIKES,AS WELL AS THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL
SIDE EFFECTS,HAD BEEN MOUNTING RAPIDLY.TINDEMANS
YESTERDAY EXPLAINED HIS DECISION TO CARRY ON WITH A
MINORITY GOVERNMENT (RATHER THAN TO RESIGN)AS MOTIVATED
BY CONCERN TO AVOID THE KIND OF INACTION IN THE FACE
OF FISCAL PROBLEMS AND INFLATIONARY PRESSURES WHICH
CHARACTERIZED THE FOUR-MONTH POLITICAL VACUUM WHICH
OCCURRED BETWEEN THE FALL OF THE LEBURTON GOVERNMENT
IN JANUARY, 1974 AND TINDEMANS ENTRY INTO OFFICE AT THE END OF
APRIL.
RENNER

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